

# Charity Commission finds misconduct and mismanagement at Humanity Torbay

Press release

The Charity Commission has identified misconduct and/or mismanagement at Devon-based charity Humanity Torbay.



The Charity Commission has identified misconduct and/or mismanagement at Devon-based charity Humanity Torbay, in relation to political campaigning and the trustees' failure to properly control the use of its social media.

The regulator has also secured a voluntary undertaking from the charity's founder and former CEO not to act as a charity trustee or hold any office of employment with senior management functions in a charity for 4 years.

Humanity Torbay provided a drop-in centre for the local community in Torbay, offering advice on health, wellbeing, housing and employment, as well as referrals to local food banks.

The Commission opened a regulatory compliance case into the charity in August 2019, after concerns were raised about the use of its social media platforms for political campaigning. The regulator also identified concerns about the charity's financial management and governance and opened a statutory inquiry in June 2020.

The inquiry found multiple instances of misconduct and/or mismanagement, including:

- the trustees' failure to maintain appropriate financial controls for the charity
- the trustees' failure to control and prevent inappropriate material being posted on social media pages in the name of the charity
- the trustees' breach of their legal duties and responsibilities concerning political campaigning and activity

In August 2021, the charity's founder and former CEO, Ellie Waugh, agreed to accept the terms of a voluntary undertaking which means she will not act as a

charity trustee or hold any office or employment with senior management functions for any charity in England or Wales, for 4 years.

The charity's trustees decided to wind up the charity in July 2020, and the charity was removed from the register in March 2021.

**Amy Spiller, Head of Investigations at the Charity Commission, said:**

The Commission's intervention in this case sends a strong message that charities should not be misused as a vehicle to express an individual's political views.

Charities' independence from party politics is not just required by the law, it is also essential in upholding public trust and confidence in charities.

**ENDS**

#### **Notes to Editors**

1. The Charity Commission is the independent, non-ministerial government department that registers and regulates charities in England and Wales. Its purpose is to ensure charity can thrive and inspire trust so that people can improve lives and strengthen society.
2. The Commission opened an inquiry on [9 June 2020](#). The full inquiry report can be viewed [here](#).
3. The charity was removed from the Charity Commission's [register of charities](#) on 15 March 2021 and is recorded as a removed charity.
4. Mrs Ellie Waugh signed a voluntary undertaking on 18 August 2021, from which point the 4 year agreement not to act as a charity trustee begins.
5. The Commission plans to consult on new social media guidance for charities later this year.

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